



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873
Email: fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov • Website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

August 4, 2014

TO: Senator Jon Erpenbach
Room 104 South, State Capitol

FROM: Emily Pope, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Grants Waitlists for UW System and Wisconsin Technical Colleges Students

At your request, I am providing information related to the waitlists for the Wisconsin Grants programs for UW System and Wisconsin technical colleges students. (Prior to 2013 Act 330, Wisconsin Grants were known as Wisconsin Higher Education Grants or WHEG.)

The Wisconsin Grants programs provide need-based grants to resident undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time at UW institutions, Wisconsin technical colleges, private, non-profit colleges and universities located in this state, and tribal colleges located in this state. Wisconsin Grants are funded through four separate appropriations: one for UW System students; one for technical college students; one for private, non-profit college students; and one for tribal college students. Individual grant amounts are determined by inputting the applicant's expected family contribution (EFC) into the grant formula approved by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB). The applicant's EFC is determined by the federal Department of Education using financial and other information provided by the applicant on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

In 2013-14, 32,865 students enrolled at UW institutions received Wisconsin Grants. An additional 3,581 UW students were eligible for Wisconsin Grants in 2013-14 but did not receive a grant through the program due to lack of funds. In that same year, 23,969 Wisconsin technical college students received Wisconsin Grants. An additional 37,844 financial aid applicants who indicated that they planned to attend a Wisconsin technical college were eligible for Wisconsin Grants but did not receive a grant through that program due to lack of funds. The number of students or financial aid applicants who were eligible for grants but did not receive one due to lack of funds is generally referred to as the Wisconsin Grant waitlist.

It is worth noting that the Wisconsin Grant waitlists are calculated differently for the UW System and for the technical colleges. Through the Wisconsin Grants-UW program, HEAB provides the grant funding to each UW institution which then awards grants to students enrolled at that institution. The Wisconsin Grant-UW waitlist consists only of students who are both eligible for a Wisconsin Grant and enrolled at a UW institution. Through the Wisconsin Grant-TCS program,

HEAB makes grants directly to students. In contrast to the Wisconsin Grant-UW waitlist, the Wisconsin Grant-TCS waitlist includes financial aid applicants who are eligible for a Wisconsin Grant-TCS award and who listed a technical college first on their FAFSA. It is not known how many of the applicants on the Wisconsin Grant-TCS waitlist actually enroll at a technical college. It is also not known whether an applicant on the Wisconsin Grant-TCS waitlist enrolled at an institution of higher education other than a technical college or if that applicant received a Wisconsin Grant-UW, Wisconsin Grant-Private Colleges, or Wisconsin Grant-Tribal Colleges award if the applicant enrolled at a UW institution, a Wisconsin private college, or a Wisconsin tribal college.

As a result, the Wisconsin Grant-UW waitlist likely understates the unmet need for that program in that it excludes applicants who may have enrolled if they had received a Wisconsin Grant-UW grant. The Wisconsin Grant-TCS waitlist likely overstates the unmet need for that program in that it includes applicants who chose not to enroll in a technical college or enrolled in another sector for reasons other than not receiving a Wisconsin Grant-TCS award. Still, given difference in the number of students/applicants on the two waitlists, it appears that the unmet need for the Wisconsin Grant-TCS program is significantly greater than for the Wisconsin Grant-UW program.

I hope this information is helpful. Please contact me if you have additional questions.

EEP/sas